

SM5347C: TOPICS IN MEDIA WORLDING: ANIMATION BEYOND TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE

Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Topics in Media Worlding: Animation Beyond Traditional Narrative

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

5347C

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course explores animation as an expressive, poetic, and emotionally driven art form. Emphasizing experimental and independent practices, students will engage deeply with animation not just as a technique, but as a language of emotion, memory, and transformation. Through lectures, screenings, workshops, and field research, the course guides students in exploring the emotional landscape of animation - where gesture, rhythm, form, and abstraction convey feeling more potently than words.

Students will explore key historical and contemporary works that move beyond traditional narrative, learning how independent artists use animation to express personal experience, emotional depth, introspection, and creative experimentation. From rotoscoping to morphing, hand-drawn expression to poetic digital images, students will experiment with techniques that align form with feeling.

The course is designed to foster an independent visual voice, inviting students to interpret the world around them, particularly the evolving landscape of Hong Kong, through the poetic lens of animated movement. Key themes include: emotion as language, animation as ritual, expanded cinema, and topophilia (love of place). Students are encouraged to build an emotional vocabulary in their animation work, while being supported by readings, feedback, and critique.

A mid-project screening and analysis session will serve as a creative intervention, offering inspiration and critical discussion to deepen ongoing final projects. The semester culminates in a final group animation project that synthesizes technical skills, theoretical inquiry, and experimental approaches.

Enrolment for SM5347 depends on School's permission, which will only be granted if the topic is essentially different from that covered in this course offered in or before Semester B 2025/26, SM6311 and SM6327.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Understand and cultivate new trends in media worlding		x	x	
2	Independently create media concepts for fine arts and design practices		x	x	
3	Explore digital Cinema and Sound as a time based medium			x	
4	Work with up-to-date digital techniques to expand the digital media worlding genre		x	x	
5	Evolve traditional methods of imaging to discover new possibilities of visual display in contemporary digital imaging, sound, cinema and associated media			x	x
6	Combine artistic creativity and technical knowledge to create works that demonstrate a personal style/ signature			x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Students will engage in formal lectures where the instructor will present concepts, theories and case studies in selected issues pertaining to media worlding.	1, 3, 5	
2	Class discussions	Students will engage in structured discussion with peers and students to identify areas to improve on in their projects	1, 3, 5	
3	Research	Students will develop an in-depth understanding of relevant materials to write papers or create artistic projects as set by the instructor.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Creative Project	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	60	-	Yes
2	Assignment Presentation and Critique	4, 5, 6	20	-	Yes
3	Writing on selected topic	1, 2, 3	20	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter

- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter

- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

(D) - Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter

- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management

Failure

(F) - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter

- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Assessment Task

Creative Project / Technical Project / Portfolio (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects.

The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature

- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production
- Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter-disciplinary project
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration

- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Limited ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Marginal

(D) - Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Failure

(F) - No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium

- Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Assessment Task

Topic essay (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to research and transform primary and secondary sources to articulate a theoretical basis of their work in Media worlding. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively developing a critical opinion and theory to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter

- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter

- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

(D) - Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter

- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management

Failure

(F) - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter

- No organization, structure or/and composition
 - Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management
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Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative concepts.
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

(B+, B) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter

- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - Satisfactory content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter

- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Failure

(F) - Unsatisfactory content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter

- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Assessment Task

Creative Project / Technical Project / Portfolio (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature

- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the applied techniques, strong conceptual development based on intensive research and knowledge of related projects in the field and innovative concepts.

Good

(B+, B) - Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium.

- Creative approach and good demonstration of the techniques applied.
- Convincing concept and its development into the final project.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Limited ability to create project/ work that represents the intended concept, superficial research in the field.

Failure

- (F) - No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium
 - Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative

Assessment Task

Topic essay (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to research and transform primary and secondary sources to articulate a theoretical basis of their work in Media worlding. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively developing a critical opinion and theory to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter
 - Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
 - Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
 - Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new perspectives or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

- (B+, B) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
 - Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
 - Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

- (B-, C+, C) - Satisfactory content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter
 - Fair organization, weak structure and composition
 - Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Failure

- (F) - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
 - No organization, structure or/and composition
 - Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Part III Other Information**Reading List****Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Wells, Paul. Understanding Animation. New York: Routledge, 1998.
2	Russett, Robert and Cecile Starr. ExperimentaAnimation: An Illustrated Anthology. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1988.
3	Stephen Cavalier. The world history of animation. Berkeley : University of California Press, c2011.
4	Williames, Richard. (1940). The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles, and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion, and Internet Animators. London, United Kingdom: Faber and Faber Ltd.
5	Furniss, Maureen. Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics. Sydney: John Libbey, 1998.

6	Budd, Mike and Max. H. Kirsch (eds.). Rethinking Disney. Middletown CT: Wesleyan UP, 2005
7	Crafton, Donald. Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898-1928. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	John Grant. Masters of animation. New York, NY : Watson-Guptill Publications, 2001.
2	John Halas. Masters of animation. London : BBC Books, 1987.
3	White, Tony. (2006). Animation from Pencils to Pixels: Classical Techniques for the Digital Animator.
4	St. Louis, USA: Focal Press, Inc.
5	White, Tony. (2009). How to Make Animated Films: Tony White's Complete Masterclass on the Traditional Principals of Animation. St. Louis, USA: Focal Press, Inc.